

DICKEY COUNTY LEADER

The Official Newspaper of Dickey County

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Superintendent Kaiser Leaving for Waphton

Wahpeton Daily News--With a 9-0 vote, the Wahpeton School Board last week approved offering a contract to Michael Kaiser to be the four-school district's next superintendent. The vote came after a 5-4 vote that approved a motion to hire Kaiser.

Kaiser, currently superintendent of Ellendale Public School, Ellendale, North Dakota, was offered a three-year contract with Wahpeton Public Schools following a Tuesday, March 15 school board meeting. Board President Damon DeVillers confirmed Wednesday that Kaiser verbally accepted the position.

"I can understand where if you're looking at me, my career and my work history, you might say, 'This guy is looking at this as a stepping stone,'" Kaiser said Tuesday. "That's not the case. This is the only application I put out this year. It was the first application I put out in several years."

Kaiser is a Dickey County native who retains close family ties to the area. He was elected Superintendent of the Ellendale Schools on June 19, 2018. He had previously served as high school principal at



Grafton. Coming to Ellendale, he replaced Mr. Jeff Fastnacht, who had served the Ellendale School district for 22 years, 16 of them as Superintendent.

The *Leader* thanks Mr. Kaiser for his good service and wishes all the best to him and his family. We look forward to providing more detail about the transition in an upcoming issue.

Casper Carnival is Friday, March 25

Come on out for a night of family fun on Friday, March 25. Bring your family and friends for concessions, cupcake walk, snow cones, horse races, hoop shoot, glow-in-the-dark ring toss, duck pond, and many more. Unlike last year, carnival attendees are not required to wear protective masks.

The carnival will be open from 6:00-8:00 pm. Ellendale Public Schools South Gym. The theme will be Neon Glow with 80's Throwback! Wear your brightest clothing. See you there!



Ellendale's Junior High Acalympics Team Takes 1st



Congratulations to the Junior High Acalympics (Academic Olympics) Team! They placed 1st at the contest last week. Pictured (l-r): Aubrey Middlestead, Ava Henning, Peyton Saylor, Ariel Hagen, Devin Waldo and Riley Goehrin. Six-member Acalympics teams compete in five categories: math, science, English, social studies, current events, and a lightning round.

Walk of Fame Inductee Left a Big Mark on Ellendale - Including "Bellville"

by Ken Smith, photo by Kevin Kendall

NOTE: This is the first of a series of articles written in coordination with the upcoming induction of five new honorees into the Ellendale Walk of Fame. The 2022 inductees are John Bell, Earl Redlin, Ralph Holte, Ernie Woodward, and Jeanette Robb. More than merely life summaries, the goal of these articles is to provide a better understanding and appreciation of our town and its unique history.

On June 5, 1917, John Lellan Bell signed up for the World War I draft. John was 25 years old unmarried, of "medium" height with hair and eyes both "dark brown." His occupation was "farmer." Though he registered in Billings County, his place of residency was given as Gaylord, North Dakota, in Stark County, ten miles south of Belfield and 30 miles from Dickinson, the county seat.

John Bell became a North Dakotan in 1906, when his family moved from Cherokee, Iowa to a homestead in western Stark County, on the edge of the Badlands. It was not an easy place to make a living, but the Bells had a strong work ethic. By 1917, John had his own herd of cattle and was building up his own farming operation.

After he was drafted, he sold all of his cattle and hay. But like many other World War I draftees, circumstances interfered: his scheduled induction was halted due to the outbreak of the "Spanish Flu." Not long afterward, the armistice was declared. John went right back into farming and ranching.

When John registered for the World War II draft in 1942, a lot of things had changed. His location had not changed, and his occupation was still listed as "farmer." But his eye color (as listed) had mysteriously turned to "grey" and his hair to "red." His complexion was "ruddy," his height was 5'9" and his weight was 200. But these were all surface features: the biggest change had taken place inside his home.

In 1924 John had married Thelma German. The two were soon parents to a large and growing household. The 1940 US Census listed John (48); wife Thelma (46) Children Lenora (12); Richard (11); Robert (11), Fred (8); Joan (7); Dauna (6); Grace (5); Douglas (3); Dulcie (3), and Alexander (1). And there were more to come. The couple would have sixteen children (three of whom would not live to adulthood). Among the children would be four sets of twins. John and Thelma would ultimately be recognized as parents of one of the state's outstanding families. In 1969 Thelma would be named the North Dakota "Mother of the year."

Whether due to his occupation and family obligations or otherwise, John was not called up to duty in World War II. And so, in early 1943, he contemplated making a major change. Having already purchased a farm a mile southwest of Ellendale, and other land to the north, he had his eye the area for its better farming climate, its greater business prospects, and its superior opportunities for education.

(continued on page 3)

First Performance of KeyNote Community Band & Choir was a Big Hit



Band Members--Flute: Charlotte Merkel; Clarinet: Lacey Merkel, Michelle Mueller, & Katherine Preus; Alto Saxophone: Stephanie Miller; Tenor Saxophone: Mitch Merkel, NaTanya Olson; Trumpet: Reed Merkel, Samuel Preus; French horn: Mariska Olson; Trombone: Evan Olson, Bethany Morehead, Allan Miller, Brett Miller; Ukulele: Roscoe Sand; Percussion: Trent Tiegs

Choir Members--Soprano: DeeAnne Gall, Alura Johnson, Charlotte Merkel, Michelle Mueller, Bethany Morehead, Maggie Preus; Alto: Alicia Boyle, Abie Haakenson, Ellen Harrison, Sharon Langley, Tiffany King, Mariska Olson, NaTanya Olson, Katherine Preus, Wanda Sheppard; Tenor: Duane Klipfel, Allan Miller, John Merkel, Mark Sheppard, Evan Olson, Marla Petersen, Amy Sand; Bass: Jeremiah Haakenson, Michael Land, Mitch Mikkonen, Brett Miller, Andrew Preus, Samuel Preus

On a grey Sunday afternoon on March 13, some 150 people gathered at the Church of the Nazarene for some bright sounds and encouraging messages. They were there to perform and to enjoy the first Community Concert of the KeyNote Community Band and KeyNote Community Choir, under the direction of Katie Miller.

The event, titled "Sacred Mosaic," featured a variety of gospel hymns, praise songs and liturgical pieces. The selections, numbering eleven in all, included "Take My Life and Let it Be," "Give Thanks," "All Creatures of Our God and King," "Amazing Grace" and "Go to Dark Gethsemane."

The audience, comprised of all ages, expressed much appreciation for the event. On behalf of the choir and band members, Katie was presented at the conclusion with a lovely sheaf of roses and a fine round of applause.

These musicians have been practicing together each week for two months. Asked if it was difficult to get volunteers to sing and play, Katie said it was surprisingly easy. "They just came," she said. "It was amazing, I was so pleased. We had 30 people show up the first night, just for choir, and fifteen for band. So that was great!"

Katie Miller's love of music goes back to her childhood. Growing up in Forbes, she was an active participant at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, and that interest continued at school. After graduating from Leola High school, she attended Northern State University in Aberdeen, where she earned a music degree. Eleven years ago, she married Brett Miller and moved to Ellendale, where she stayed busy teaching piano lessons out of her studio, which is named "Keynote Studio."

The demands of motherhood required her to cut back a bit on her musical calling, but in the last year, the desire to bring people together to make music got stronger. "My husband has been wanting a community choir," she said, "and I've been wanting a community band for awhile. So we decided it was time."

The KeyNote Band & Choir not only have a good number of members given its short history, they are also drawn from across

denominations. Members of Zion Lutheran and Christ The King Lutheran joined with people from the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, the Presbyterian United Methodist Church, New Life Assembly, the Church of the Nazarene, and Bethlehem Lutheran in Forbes.

KeyNote Philosophy

"We want to provide a place for musicians of any age who are experienced as well as those who are just beginning and desire to learn how to be in an ensemble.

"We believe making music is good for our physical and emotional health, so we will strive to provide a low-stress but focused time of enjoying music that sounds good.

"While we'll try to provide a fun and a friendly atmosphere, we'll also strive to provide some musical vitamins through pleasing harmonies, nostalgic music of days gone by, and fun arrangements of new music."

The groups are also diverse in age, and that makes Katie especially happy. "My goal, honestly," she said, "is to unite the generations in music. We have a lot of young people who want to be involved, and--I don't want to say 'old people' because they're not 'old'-- but we want it to be a family thing. We have families who have kids who want to join and make music together. It's important to us."

The March 13 concert is only the beginning for the enthusiastic band and choir members. Another concert--this one out of doors--is scheduled for the last Sunday in June. Rehearsals for the next session start Sunday, April 24, 2022. Anyone from age 13 on up may join. The choir is a four-part choir, and since it is non-audition, each person is able to choose the part they will sing. Reading music is helpful but not required. Beginning singers are welcome.

Anyone interested in joining Katie and these friendly musicians can talk to Katie, or go to keynote.studio/knmusic for more information.



Walk of Fame Inductee John Bell Left Big Mark

(continued from page 1)

Initially, the Bells moved to a ranch near Monango. After several years, though, Ellendale’s attractions were too great to resist. “It was the Bell’s belief in education for their children that moved them from their farm into town,” recalled a 1969 memorial to John’s life. Many decades later, the Bell children still stress that important point, with appreciation for their parents’ foresight. All of the Bell children would receive excellent educations, including college.

Once in Ellendale, John wasted little time diversifying his business interests. With the war barely over and local military recruits still re-acclimating to civilian life on and off the farm, he started the Dickey County Implement Company. “Announcing our appointment as dealers in this territorial for the famous Case 77 modern farm machines,” read a January 10, 1946 *Leader* ad. “Our reason for choosing the Case line is the same as your reason for choosing Case machines—it costs less to farm with Case.” And then, in bold letters, the ad invited farmers to “See the Tractor That’s FIRST IN ECONOMY.”

Selling farm implements, however, was apparently not enough to keep John busy. On the lot currently occupied by Harvest Gardens, John opened Dickey County Lumber. The building materials business would help supply the town’s postwar building boom. A July 1947 *Aberdeen American* newspaper article marveled at Ellendale’s rapid growth. “A tremendous amount of building in Ellendale has been underway in the past two years, both residential and business structures, with the city auditor’s permit records showing an estimated cost at the time of applications for permits passing the \$126,000 mark, and, with this figure being conservatively estimated as barely scratching the surface, due to the increased cost of labor and material.”

As with the promotions for Case tractors, John Bell’s approach to both labor and sales emphasized economy. While school came first for his sons, he put them to work around the lumberyard. He had them help with many of the construction projects that he increasingly began to undertake. A classmate from the high school recalled that he and other sports teammates would pitch in to help unload lumber and materi-

John Bell preferred word-of-mouth advertising to buying space in the newspapers, but he did run a few ads. In January 1949 he rented the Lyric Theater to show free promotional films from the Case Corporation, and also offered a free lunch. With tractors and building materials in high demand, his implement dealership and lumberyard both thrived.

als from rail cars, because their father insisted on that work being completed before the Bell boys could go to athletic practice.

Demand for housing was so great that John Bell cast his eyes to the southwest edge of town, where he planned a new addition. It would be known as “Bellville.” The homes the Bells built there were rented, and some eventually sold. Always a strong family man and a believer in growth, Bell offered a free month’s rent to any family upon the arrival of a new baby.

“While we lived in the Bell addition our daughter was born,” recalled Gloria Meidinger in a recent Facebook post. “Went to pay the rent and Mrs. Bell said, ‘No charge, it’s a baby gift.’ I will never forget that.” Mary Sue Kee remembered that police: “Yes,” she said, “we got two months’ free rent out there.”

The Bells loved children, but that was not there only focus. The biggest structure in Belleville , built mostly with Bell labor, was the Golden Rule rest home. Several years before the Ellendale Nursing Center (now Prince of Peace) went up, John Bell built it as an assisted living center. The Golden Rule would serve an essential role in the community right up until 1994,

COME TO OUR BIG SHOW

at the

Lyric Theatre, Ellendale

Starting at 1:30 o'clock p.m., on

MONDAY JAN. 24

5000 YEARS OF FARMING

From the Sweat of Egyptian Slaves to Modern Miracle Machines

Shown in Full-Color Sound Film

OTHER ATTRACTIONS

“SAGA OF SAWDUST SAM”—FARM SAFETY FILM

SOUND MOVIE ON SOIL CONSERVATION

Come — Enjoy an Afternoon of Entertainment — Bring the Family

Sponsored by

DICKEY COUNTY IMPLEMENT CO.

JOHN BELL, Proprietor ELLENDALE, N. D.

YOUR CASE DEALER

Lunch Will be Served - Door Prizes

Do you need to make repairs or improvements ?

"as your dealer in building supplies - I know YOU CAN DO IT BETTER WITH DACOTAH CEMENT"

"there are 5 quality Dacotah Cements . . . all of the highest quality"

"I have a very helpful FREE FOLDER for you"

"Stop in soon . . ."

Dickey County Implement Co.

when most of the residents transferred to the new Evergreen Place (formerly the community hospital).

The next edition of the Bell Story will discuss changes in the town in the late 1950’s and the 1960’s, and John’s role as Ellendale’s mayor for two terms.

Hunter Education Course Begins April 9, 2022

Ellendale--The North Dakota Hunter Education Course will begin in Ellendale starting April 9 at the Ellendale Public School MPR from 9:00am until 4:30pm. Anyone age 11 through 15 by July 1 interested in completing this course should sign up by Emailing Jerry Rekow at jrepair@drtel.net with your contact info in case of Class changes.

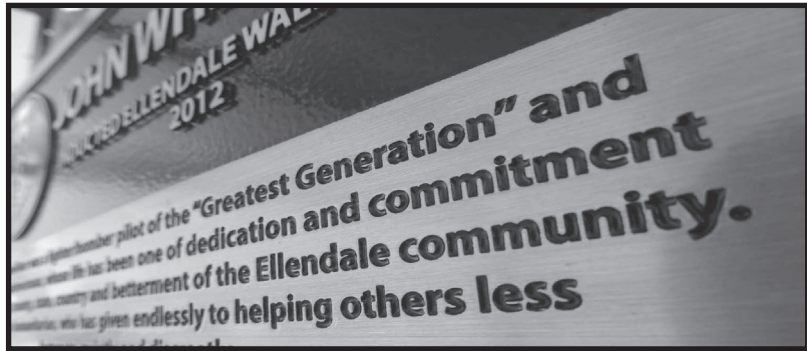
Class on April 9 from 9am until 4:30 with ½ hr lunch, Class from 3:45 until 5:45pm on the 11th, Class from 3:45 until 5:45pm and from 6:15 until 8:15pm on the 12th, Class from 3:45 until 5:45pm and from 6:15 until 8:15pm on the 19th, Class from 3:45 until 5:45pm on the 22nd and Class from 9:00 am until 12:00 noon on the 23rd. The 2 evening classes will be for Bow hunting certification and are not required to complete the course but are highly recommended. The test for the Youth class on April 23 will be from 9:00am until 12:00 noon and the Home study class will test at 1 pm. All classes will be held at the Ellendale Public School. The instructors will inform the class if any schedule changes are needed.

Every North Dakota resident born after 1961 must pass this course in order to buy a hunting license. The course is free of charge to everyone. Books are also free. Anyone wanting to make donations can do so by asking an Instructor. Those taking the course must be 11 years of age or older by July 1st. A parent must accompany Students to the first class for class information.

In conjunction with the Youth class there will be a Home-study class starting on April 9 from 2pm until 5pm. The Home-study students will test at 1pm on Saturday the 23rd. Home-study students age 16 thru Adult must complete the 3 hour class and their Home-study work and practical test.

Remember we ask that all students register by email to Jerry at jrepair@drtel.net. In the email please include your contact information in case of a class change.

Course instructors are Ken Retzlaff, Jerry Rekow, Matt Herman, Walt Zimbleman. If you have any questions about the course you may contact Ken at 349-3834, Jerry at 535-0982, Matt at 349-3232.



The late John Wheelihan is honored on one of the 15 Walk of Fame plaques already installed at Brandenburger Park. Wheelihan was a good friend of the Bell family, and spoke often of John Bell's excellent record of community service. Bell is one of five new inductees to receive a plaque this summer.

COVID-19 Headlines March 5 - 18

Compiled by Ken Smith

NOTE: all of these headlines are from the *Fargo Forum*, one of the state's largest daily newspapers. Their inclusion here is not necessarily an endorsement of the decisions on the part of *Forum* editors on what stories to run, or their choice of headlines.

March 5: COVID-19 cases continue to subside in North Dakota: over the last week the state continued its rapid fall from an omicron surge earlier this year; active virus case numbers have fallen by almost 94% from a pandemic record of more than 13,200 cases near the end of January" • "Minnesota positive COVID test rate dips below ‘caution’ threshold: Minnesota’s positive COVID-19 test rate has dropped beneath 5% for the first time in over half a year as daily infections, hospitalizations and deaths continue to decline" • "Almost a third of people report lingering symptom 6-12 months after COVID-19"

March 6: "Protesters flock to Washington area Trucks, RVs and cars gather to protest COVID-19 restrictions" • "Climate change, COVID loom over Iditarod race Alaska’s 50th annual race seeing major changes"

March 7: "'People’s Convoy' truck protest drives laps around Washington: Hundreds of trucks, recreational vehicles and cars were circling the outskirts of Washington on Sunday, threatening to cause traffic backups around the capital as part of a protest against pandemic restrictions"

March 8: COVID Collapse Continues in ND: The collapse of the latest coronavirus spike in North Dakota continued over the weekend, with reports of fewer than 100 COVID-19 cases for three straight days, including just 32 on Monday" • "Florida breaks with CDC, recommends no COVID vaccine for healthy children" • "Moderna to set up mRNA vaccine facility in Kenya : Moderna said it would set up a manufacturing facility in Kenya, its first in Africa, to produce messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines, including COVID-19 shots.

March 9: "State's COVID Cases Falling: North Dakota Health Officials reported fewer than 100 new COVID-19 cases for a fourth consecutive day, and another drop in active cases" • "WHO Supports Boosters: Omicron Convinces Experts to Recommend Extra Vaccine Doses" (*Bismarck Tribune*)

March 10: "Expulsions at US border could end: US leaning toward ending COVID-era policy blocking migrants"

March 11: "North Dakota to tone down COVID-19 response: Gov. Doug Burgum announced Thursday, March 10, the state will pull back on its response to the COVID- 19 pandemic as infection numbers fall." • "US Justice Dept taps chief prosecutor to lead COVID fraud probes"

March 12: "Two Year Toll: the Forum front page contained a large graphic showing numbers of infections, deaths and vaccinations for North Dakota, Minnesota and the United States at large. This followed the announcement by Governor Burgum that North Dakota will shift from regarding COVID situation as a "pandemic" to the status of 'endemic.'"

March 13: "COVID Risk in Minnesota Remains at Lows Not Seen Since Summer 2021"

March 14: "With end of pandemic in sight, endemic COVID awaits " • "Former President Obama tests positive for COVID-19"

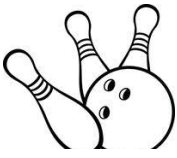
March 15: "Pfizer CEO: 4th COVID Shot Necessary - COVID-19 Shots could soon become an annual item on your to-do list . . . due to waning effectiveness"

March 16: "Pfizer & BioNTech filed an application with U.S. regulators seeking emergency use authorization for a second booster shot of their COVID-19 vaccine for people aged 65 and older" • "Travel Nurses Are Here to Stay: Hospitals will continue to lean on them post-COVID"

March 17: "'Last ditch' COVID battle China’s Jilin province struggles with positive COVID-19 cases"

March 18: " New COVID variant is here The new omicron subvariant BA.2 may not be that bad, though"

Bowling Scores



Early Bird	High Games - Denise Enge 192,
Bollinger Farms.....	Sue Boniek 188, Breanna Kiser 187
Uecker Farms.....	17-15
Ranch House.....	17-15
PinPushers.....	17-15
Haugen's Heros.....	15-17
Pahl Farms.....	12-20

NEW

Ellendale Landfill Hours
December 1- March 31
Saturday - 12:00 - 4:00

PAID INTERNSHIPS AVAILABLE!

If you have a college or high school aged child or grandchild who would like to live in your community this summer, there are paid newspaper internships available offering experience in things like reporting, photography, and/or design.

To express interest, contact your local newspaper or email sarahes@ndna.com today.

American Legion

Birthday Party!

Friday, March 25 • 5:00 p.m.

at the Legion Hall

Meat and Buns Provided

Potluck so bring dish to pass

FOR ALL...

- Legion Members & Spouses
- Sons of the Legion & Spouses
- Auxiliary Members & Spouses

— PUBLIC IS INVITED —

FRONT DESK COORDINATOR

Lisbon Smiles is seeking a Full-Time (Mon-Fri) Front Desk Coordinator.

We are looking for someone upbeat, caring and professional to add to our team. The right candidate should have exceptional organizational skills, be flexible, have the ability to multitask, and have a positive attitude!

Competitive pay, benefits and incentives.

Please email your resume to jennifer@lisbonsmiles.com

lisbon smiles

Ryan Nelson, DDS

(701) 683-7695

www.lisbonsmiles.com

The Leola Volunteer Fire Department

invites you to-

FIREMAN FUN NIGHT

March 26th

6:30 PM at the Legion Hall

Come join the Leola Volunteer Fire Department for a fun-filled night of raffle prizes, door prizes, blackjack, and Texas hold-em tables, pork loin/roast beef and sides, and all you can drink beer and mixed drinks. *\$50 raffle ticket (gets you in the door and in 30 prize raffle extravaganza) or \$30 at the door for meal and drinks only.

Tickets can be purchased in advance from any local Leola business or through any Leola Firefighters. Proceeds go to the purchase of new equipment and training.

MUST BE 21 TO ENTER!

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Legion Donates to Library



On March 17 a couple of happy library representatives, Vicky Crabtree (left) and Janet Peterson (right) had their St. Patrick's Day smiles made bigger as they received the latest donation for the purchase of new books. Rick Wadholm Sr., representing the American Legion, said the donation committee had considered the fact that large-print children's books are a popular library item. Some of these books come in series, and in addition to other things, the 1,000 dollar donation will help the library acquire more books to complete these series.

The Ellendale Public Library's mission is to provide collections of information to our community through a wide, inclusive range of resources to support learning and teaching. It is located right across the street from the NAPA store, just south of Starion. Library hours are Tuesday 10:00 am – 5:00 pm, Thursday 2:00 pm – 7:00 pm, and Saturday 9:00 am – 12:00 pm. The library's phone: 701-349-3852 mail: Elllibrary@drtel.net

The library offers internet access via six Windows computers, and also has a fax machine and copier (.25 for b&w, .50 for color). The library book club meets once a month. In the summer (from Memorial Day to Labor Day) the library hosts Story Hour each Wednesday morning.

Anton Carruth Honored at 'Parade of Champions'

Thunder's Anton Carruth was honored at the State Class B Boys Basketball Tournament last week with the 'Parade of Champions' ceremony between games Saturday evening. 'Parade of Champions' features Class B State champions in sports and academics.

Anton was the State Champion in wrestling taking 1st at 170 lbs and as he was announced and walked onto the Minot State gym floor, he received a loud ovation from those attending. 'Parade of Champions' is also shown on WDAY TV as part of their tournament broadcast.

Congratulations again Anton. EEK fans are proud that you were there!

Also, a note to the coaches, from Anton's mother, CarolLee: "EEK Thunder has the most amazing coaches," she said. "These coaches put so much time, effort, and love into their wrestlers. You can see it!"



Lodge Donates to Close Up

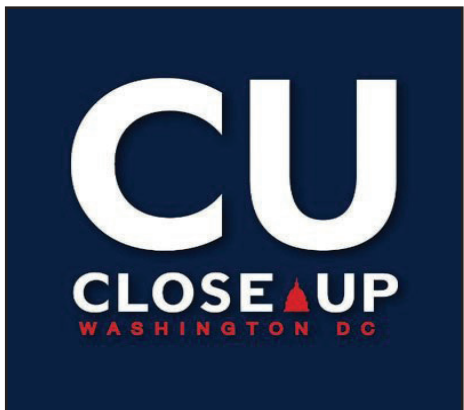


Submitted

The members of Ellendale Lodge No. 13, for the 35th consecutive year, sponsored a successful fund raiser for the Close Up students of Ellendale High School. On December 5, 2021 a delicious baked potato with beef stroganoff, chili and broccoli and cheese topping was served to a very nice crowd of about 110 people who came and supported the students.

A profit of \$2227.00 will be divided among the students who sold tickets. The 9 students benefiting are as follows; Loryn Lang, Sara Young, Ella Miller, McKenna Glynn, Brynn Gibson, Riley Thorpe, Hannah Seefeld and Madi Anliker. Cindy Rall will be accompanying the students on their trip to Washington D.C. this year.

The Masons have raised over \$84,114.00 since they started serving baked potato dinners. They would like to thank the community for supporting our young people. Z's Market donated the potatoes this year, and Choice Bank provided coffee cups



and napkins. We really appreciate the donations as this enables us to have more money to give to the students.

It is the Mason's hope that the students who go to Washington, D.C. to observe our government up close will come home and use that experience to become better citizens of our country and our community.

Thanks again to all who supported this great cause from the members of Ellendale Lodge.

Matt Herman to Be Inducted into NDIAAA Hall of Fame

Ellendale ND

Matt Herman, former athletic director at Ellendale High School, has been selected for induction to the Hall of Fame of the North Dakota Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association. Herman will be inducted in Fargo on April 3, 2022 at the NDIAAA spring conference awards banquet.

Matt graduated from Kulm High School in 1981. He was active in every activity he could, as a means to get out of some kind of farm work. He went on to earn degrees in business and physical education at Mayville State in 1986, while earning four varsity letters in football and participating in JV baseball. He earned a Master's Degree from Bemidji State University in 1992.

Matt began his coaching career in 1986 at Central Valley High School while student teaching. That was also the start of a mentoring bond with Hall of Famer Randy Vigen that would be invaluable to Matt throughout his career. From 1988 to 1990 Matt taught business, physical education and health, and served at Drake High School as assistant football and assistant boys basketball coach. He received a graduate assistantship and was an assistant football coach at Bemidji State University from 1990 to 1992.

In 1992 Matt began a six-year stint as principal, business teacher, and head football coach at Trenton High School. During that time he took over as athletic director in Trenton. Matt developed an extra-curricular salary schedule with a system of rewards for longevity and coaches education that was adopted by the local school board. He worked with the Williston area officials associations and was an early adopter of 3-man crews for basketball and 5-man crews for football contests. During that time, Matt was a member of football advisory for the ND High School Coaches Association and helped develop the 4-class system for football that expanded playoff opportunities for all schools.

Matt came to Ellendale in 1998 as high school principal and athletic director. During that time he has also been an assistant football coach and was head girls basketball coach for eight years. Matt's girls' teams participated in six consecutive regional tournaments and five consecutive district championship games, winning three. He organized tournaments for JV girls basketball and volleyball and JH volleyball to provide opportunities for these underserved student athletes.

Matt also played a significant role in planning and designing the new gymnasium and track as well as many other athletic facility improvements. He became a meet starter after the Ellendale track was constructed. Herman assisted Coach Rick Hack with organizing the many track meets at Ellendale, helping line up the countless volunteers to work the meet events. Area coaches were always grateful to come to Ellendale and be able to coach their track and field athletes



during a meet and not have to be stuck working an event like is so common at meets elsewhere.

Matt is a 25+ year member of the ND High School Coaches Association, the ND Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association, and ND Association of Secondary School Principals. He has served on the state board of the NDIAAA and the NDASSP. He managed over 100 regional, district, and invitational tournaments and served on the ND High School Activities Association District Chairs committee seven times. He was named district or regional coach, AD, and principal of the year numerous times. He is also a past NDIAAA beanbag state champion.

Matt's most valuable partner all along has been his wife Darla. They have four children, Tyler, Jacob, Ashley, and Rachel. Since stepping back from athletic administration, they are enjoying their grandchildren, regenerative ranching, and all kinds of outdoor pursuits.

Thelma Bell, Wife of 2022 Walk of Fame Inductee & Mother of 16, Left Impressive Legacy

by Ken Smith

Note: Last week the *Leader* ran the first in a series of articles on the Walk of Fame inductees that will be honored at the 2022 All-School Reunion, coming up July 7-9. That article was about John Bell (1891-1969) and it discussed his early life on a farm near the Badlands, his move to Ellendale, his role as Case implement dealer and lumber yard owner, and his sixteen children.

This week, we begin with a focus on Thelma German Bell, a remarkable woman without whom John Bell would likely have achieved little of note. John and Thelma were both high achievers who contributed more than their share to the community and nation. Their children are by far their greatest legacy.

When Thelma German Bell was named North Dakota's 1969 Mother of the year, she was feted at an April banquet in Bismarck, with Governor William Guy and State Senator Earl Redlin as speakers. 300 distinguished guests were there, including an entourage from Ellendale. It was a remarkable honor for a remarkable lady. Though many previous winners had been mothers of large families, the award was always based on quality and not just quantity. In both those categories, and others as well, Thelma was most deserving of the recognition.

The concern that parents of large families may unintentionally deprive their children of attention is not a new concern. In an interview given shortly after winning the award, Thelma sought to address that issue. The interviewer reported what Thelma said: "An avid fan of each of her children, Mrs. Bell rarely missed an athletic, school or musical event. Since there were originally ten boys in the family, this adds up to a lot of basketball, football and track events, in addition to numerous school concerts and recitals. 'You know,' Mrs. Bell commented, 'every time I saw one of our young Bells in the spotlight I felt as though he were my only child at that moment. There was no jealousy problem because at one time or another each child was in that spotlight.'"

The reporter noted "some unusual accomplishments" of the Bells. "The family ushered children through a total of 216 years of school: the boys served a collective 48 years in the armed forces—one has flown over 100 flying missions; all of the children attended college; and the Bell home is well decorated with medals and ribbons" (*Aberdeen Daily News*, March 30, 1969).

As mentioned in last week's article, John and Thelma were drawn to this part of the state when they saw better opportunities for both business and education. These were the two main factors that led them from western North Dakota to Dickey County, and then from a farm near Monango to Ellendale.

Education was particularly important to Thelma. As a small girl growing up on a ranch on the Little Missouri River in the North Dakota badlands, there were no schools within practical distance. So Thelma's parents sent her to Slope County, where she could attend school while staying with her grandparents. When she and her siblings (four little sisters and one little brother) got older, though, their parents took matters into their own hands: they hired a teacher and opened a school on their ranch. Neighborhood chil-



Thelma Bell (1903-1998) was named North Dakota's Mother of the Year in 1969. Mother of the Year contests were started in 1935 by American Mothers, Inc., whose goal is to "harness the power of maternal energy to make a positive impact in the world." dren joined, and the German family school became the nucleus for a new district. A few years later a schoolhouse was built.

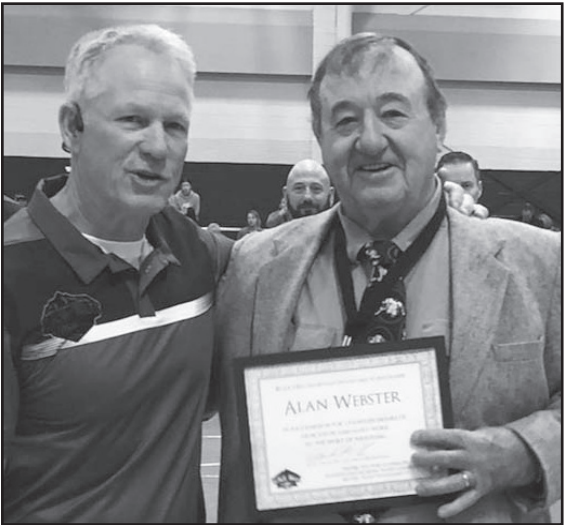
When Thelma completed the 8th grade, her parents sent her to Belfield, where she attended high school while staying with her grandparents. In the summers, she would return home to help her sisters, "doing all kinds of ranch work." After completing high school she enrolled at Dickinson State College where she earned her teaching certificate. Her first assignment was to a one-room school fifteen miles from her parents' ranch in the Badlands. On weekends, she rode the family horse, Herb, to stay with her family. The rest of the time she boarded with the family of Elmer Bell. Elmer's brother John, who was ranching south of Belfield, became interested in her, and she in him. The two were married in 1924.

John and Thelma Bell's first child, named Elmer after John's brother, died a few days after he was born. For the next three years there were no more children. "We thought the Lord had passed us by," Thelma recalled in a 1977 interview. Then, in 1928, their oldest child, Lenora, came onto the scene. "It kind of snowballed after that," Mrs. Bell said. Indeed, over the next 17 years, the Bells had 14 more children, including four sets of twins. One boy, Alexander (Sandy), would die of Leukemia, despite receiving top care from a specialist in San Francisco. Another, Richard, was killed in a tractor accident.

(continued on page 3)

Mom & Dad of 16 Left Impressive Legacy

Lifetime Award Goes to Coach Alan Webster (EHS 1970)



Alan Webster of Custer, South Dakota was recognized for his coaching with a Lifetime Achievement Award at the 18th annual AAU World Folkstyle Wrestling Championships held in Spearfish, SD on February 19, 2022. Ironically, Alan and his wife Kim sat with wrestlers and fans from the EEK (Ellendale/Edgeley/Kulm)Thunder AAU wrestling team who were there competing. Quite a coincidence, considering there were countless people in attendance!

Alan got his start in the sport as a member of the Cardinals Wrestling team in the late 1960's. He placed second in state in his senior year, and a teammate, Butch Nell, placed third. But this was just a start: Alan's coaching at Custer High school would win countless meets and awards for over three decades.

Alan and Kim have two sons and seven grandchildren. Seth, Teresa and family live and teach in Gregory, SD. Jared, Hallie and family live and teach in Custer, SD. Both sons are wrestling coaches.

Alan and Kim feel blessed to spend time with their family, to have had the opportunity to teach, to be involved in wrestling and to spend time working at their family farm in Ellendale, North Dakota.

Postscript: John Bell died on December 7, 1969, just 11 months after Thelma was named mother of the year. It was left to Thelma to summarize her and John's life accomplishments. In more than one interview, Thelma said she had no regrets, and that when it came to raising all those children, she would gladly do it all over again.



FAMILY BUS — Standing in front of the bus in which they plan a vacation trip is the John Bell family of Ellendale, N. D. Left to right: Emil, Winston, Franklin, Lois, Leonard, Douglas, Alexander, Dulcie, Lenora, Grace, Joan, Dauna, Robert, Fred, Mrs. and Mr. Bell. North Dakota officials have ruled that Bell must pay \$32 for a license to operate the machine.

This picture appeared in the June 6, 1948 edition of the *Sioux Falls Argus-Leader*. In a 1969 interview, Thelma Bell explained the origins of the photo. "When the family outgrew our car," she said, "we purchased an old school bus for family use. There was a disagreement as to whether we should be required to purchase commercial license plates or regular car plates. Finally, with the help of news stories and word of mouth, we convinced authorities that we were still a family despite our size."

Much of the information for this week's feature article was provided by Forrest Bell. Forrest (originally Emil, whose nickname was "Frog") is the smallest child at far left.

(continued from page 1)

Despite these setbacks, the Bells kept their spirits strong. Twin boys, born in the World War II year of 1943, were named Franklin and Winston, in honor of the American President and the British Prime Minister who were leading the Allied forces. John and Thelma gave these twins optimistic middle names: "Franklin Vick and Winston Tory." Combined, the two brothers middle names were "Vick-Tory" for "victory." In 1945 the youngest Bell child, Forrest, came along. And the Bell's kept that theme right up to the war's end: Thelma would later refer to Forrest, who was born in 1945, as the family's "Victory Baby."

When the war ended, Ellendale entered a period of rapid growth. While the Bell family did not experience any more numerical growth, they would expand in other ways. John started Dickey County Implement (the local Case dealership) in 1946, and business boomed. And then, he started a lumber dealership. In a recent interview, Forrest recalled that the lumber business came more or less by accident: in the process of putting up a building, John found himself with an extra train car load of lumber. Upon

selling it, he recognized that the demand for building materials was considerably larger than the supply, so he opened Dickey County Lumber.

Thelma, who worked as a bookkeeper for the businesses, remembered her husband, who was 11 years her senior, as an excellent businessman. "My husband was a remarkable manager," she later recalled. To help manage family affairs, John bought the only vehicle with room for the whole family, a school bus. He used it for family vacations and general-purpose transportation. J.D. Crabtree also used it for boy scout outings.

The Bell bus came to national attention in 1948 when John was told he needed a school bus license for the vehicle. Thinking this unfair, he insisted he was not using it as a school bus, but as a family car. After some consideration, the North Dakota Motor Vehicle Department agreed, allowing him to use the bus with a regular license. By the time the issue was cleared up, the article had been picked up by the Associated Press and run in scores of papers around the country, along with the photograph of the family that appears above. Dickey County Lumber also reproduced the photo on

their calendar.

The Bells stayed very busy with construction projects in the 1950's, filling out more than 20 lots in Bell's Addition with economy houses, and building the Golden Rule Rest Home, which opened in 1959. A lesser-known fact is that John was interested in oil exploration, stemming from his connections in western North Dakota. In 1954 he brought drillers in to sink a deep exploratory well on his land southwest of town. It was one of at least five wells drilled in the area by the Herman Hanson Oil Syndicate of Turtle Lake, North Dakota. No oil was found, but the project did create one of the strongest-flowing artesian wells in the area.

In 1858, John was elected Mayor of Ellendale. Having spent fifteen years in local business, and familiar with the issues affecting residences, businesses, and infrastructure, he was well qualified. John had already had the foresight to initiate the creation of an Economic Development Council.

When he became mayor, John oversaw meetings with large dockets of business. Browsing through city council minutes in the *Leader* reveals that the "city dads" had their hands full with small and large

decisions. The fast-growing town, which hosted far more businesses than is the case today, presented plenty of challenges.

Planning and paying for new water mains was one big task John led. Another was overseeing easement and funding issues so that Highway 281 could be reconstructed through town. Some favored a bypass, but most businessmen were reluctant to shuttle traffic around the town instead of directly through it. The city would raise \$58,000 for its 25% share of the project.

Also, Bell, along with C.G. Kee, laid the groundwork for building the a new dam on the Elm River. The project was stalled until 1962 due to issues with funding and state approval, but it led finally to the creation of Pheasant Lake.

John ran for a second mayoral term in 1962, but lost out to Earl Redlin, who would serve from 1962 to 1970. Redlin, who will also be honored with a star in the 2022 Walk of Fame, would have a highly productive mayoral tenure. An upcoming issue of the *Leader* will detail some of the accomplishments under his leadership.

Bowling Scores



Early Bird	
Bollinger Farms.....	21-15
Uecker Farms.....	20-16
Ranch House.....	18-18
Haugen's Heros.....	18-18
PinPushers.....	18-18
Pahl Farms.....	13-23
High Games - Jamie Diemert 200, Elaine Scallon 187, Denise Enge 180	
High Series - Emily Orwig 481, Elaine Scallon 489, Andrea Hiles	

PROPERTY FOR SALE (SEALED BIDS - City of Ellendale)

The City of Ellendale/Ellendale Housing Authority is accepting bids for the Townhouse units located at 304-328 5th St N in Ellendale ND. These eight units are all ground level and include:

- 2 bedrooms
- 1 3/4 bath
- walk-in closets
- central air/electric heat
- 1178 sq ft
- an attached garage

A minimum bid of \$660,000. Bids must be submitted to the City Auditor at Ellendale City Hall, 55 3rd Ave S or mail to: City of Ellendale, PO Box 267, Ellendale, ND 58436 by 4:00p.m., April 8, 2022. Please write "Bid for Ellendale Housing" on envelope. The bids will be opened by the Ellendale City Council during their Regular Meeting on Monday, April 11, 2022.

The best and highest bidder will be selected if the city Council deems the bid to be for an acceptable price and if that person's intentions are deemed in the best interests of the City of Ellendale by a majority of the members of the City Council. Excepted bidders, if any, will be contacted and payment will be due within (60) business days. The City has the right to reject any and all bids.

DICKEY COUNTY ROAD RESTRICTIONS

NOTICE: Road restrictions went into effect for Dickey County, North Dakota, at 6 a.m. Last Friday, March 18.

All county roads are plainly signed with the spring load limits and remain consistent with previous years' load restrictions. The statewide load limit system is based on ton-per-axle restrictions.

This system provides for greater uniformity with the state of North Dakota and adjacent states and allows for better communication of the load restriction process to the trucking industry.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW in Dickey County

The load limit on most roads is rated a 7-ton per axle, 80,000 lb. max, other roads vary due to composition. IE: GUELPH ROAD (DC 12) 103 Ave, is 6 tons per axle- 65,000 lb. max. DC 3, 88th Ave, (AKA the Oakes Road) is 8 ton per axle- 90,000 lb. maximum from Oakes to Fullerton.

All county road limits are indicated on a map provided by the Dickey County Highway Department on our Dickey County website, www.dickeynd.com. Remember, Townships may post their own load limits, so it's always best to check before moving loads through our county.

There will be NO overweight permits issued when load limits are in effect.

"We appreciate your compliance with load limits year-round1 as they are in place to protect YOUR roads. Please help preserve your road system, reduce road maintenance and save Dickey County tax dollars."

Questions and concerns should be directed to the Dickey County Highway Department, which can be reached at 701-349-3,326.

NEW

Ellendale Landfill Hours
December 1- March 31
Saturday - 12:00 - 4:00

~JOIN US~

ST. HELENA'S

DRIVE THRU FISH FRY

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Friday, April 1

5PM-7PM

(or until we run out)

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